

AGENDA

Senate Select Committee on Central Valley Economic Development

**Friday, March 4, 2005
Fresno County Farm Bureau
1274 W. Hedges
Fresno, CA
10:00 A.M.**

“The Impact of Rural Crime on the Central Valley”

Opening Remarks – Senator Charles S. Poochigian, Chair

Panel 1

Paul Venosdel, California State Director
United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development

Panel 2

The Honorable Phil Cline, District Attorney
Tulare County

The Honorable Elizabeth Egan, District Attorney
Fresno County

Witnesses in Support:

The Honorable Edward Jagels, Kern County District Attorney (Invited)
The Honorable Ronald Calhoun, Kings County District Attorney (Invited)
The Honorable Ernest LiCalsi, Madera County District Attorney (Invited)
The Honorable Gordon Spencer, Merced County District Attorney
The Honorable James Brazelton, Stanislaus County District Attorney (Invited)
Pat O’Hern, San Joaquin County District Attorney’s Office

Panel 3

Sergeant Ric Yorke
Kern County Sheriff’s Department

Ed Needham, Manager of Citrus Operations
Paramount Farming

Sergeant Greg Galarte
Fresno County Sheriff’s Department

Arthur Machado
Machado Dairy

Witnesses in Support:

Detective Brett Hershberger, Kings County Sheriff's Department
Detective Ryan Cosyns, Madera County Sheriff's Department
Detective Kevin Pierce, Merced County Sheriff's Department
Detective Randy Bender, San Joaquin County Sheriff's Department
Detective Giles New, Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department
Sergeant Mike Renteria, Tulare County Sheriff's Department

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Panel 4

The Honorable Richard Pierce, Sheriff
Fresno County

The Honorable Bill Wittman, Sheriff
Tulare County

Witnesses in Support:

The Honorable Allan McLain, Kings County Sheriff
The Honorable John Anderson, Madera County Sheriff
The Honorable Les Weidman, Stanislaus County Sheriff
Commander Steve Del Tour, Kern County Sheriff's Office
Sergeant Rick Marshall, Merced County Sheriff's Office
Assistant Sheriff Steve Moore, San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office

HEARING BACKGROUND

Crime and Economic Development

California's Central Valley continues to be one of the state's most economically depressed areas. Since the area was settled, agriculture has served as the economic base of the eight counties that comprise the San Joaquin Valley. Indeed, in 2003, the counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tulare produced over \$16 billion in agricultural products. But even with this bounty of agricultural production, California's San Joaquin Valley has the worst unemployment rate in the nation, the highest poverty rate in California, a high school drop out rate that is double the state average, and some of the highest crime rates in the state.

In April 2001, the California Attorney General released a report, *Crime in California*, which attempted to quantify the impacts of crime on economic development. The report states that, although it is difficult to accurately measure, estimates of the direct and indirect economic costs of crime nationwide are in the tens to hundreds of billions of dollars annually.

Although not arriving at a specific estimated cost for California, the report recognized that crime does have a significant economic impact on society. Specifically, it considered the following to be foremost “effects” of crime:

1. Costs to government to operate the criminal justice system (police, prosecution, courts, probation, incarceration, parole).
2. Property stolen or damaged.
3. Loss of productivity to society – because of death, medical and mental disabilities.
4. Loss of work time by victims of crime and their families.
5. Loss of property values in neighborhoods with high rates of crime.
6. Medical costs to individuals and government – because of injuries suffered due to crime.
7. Pain and suffering of crime victims, their families, and friends, as well as communities plagued by crime.

Considering the above list in a rural context, it is not difficult to comprehend that the economy of the San Joaquin Valley suffers a loss from each instance of rural crime.

The Central Valley Rural Crime Prevention Program

General History

Established in 1996 as a three-year project in Tulare County, the Rural Crime Prevention Pilot Project was charged with developing and implementing new crime prevention strategies in an effort to reduce rural crimes, specifically agricultural property crimes. The legislation required the establishment of a multi-agency task force which included representatives from the county Sheriff's Department, the District Attorney's Office, and the Agricultural Commissioner's Office.

Based on the success of the Tulare County pilot project and continued concerns about agricultural crime in the entire San Joaquin Valley region, in 1999, the program was expanded to include seven additional counties: Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus. This legislation also provided an annual appropriation of \$3.5 million distributed as follows:

Fresno County	\$792,625
Kern County	\$592,625
Kings County	\$292,625
Madera County	\$192,625
Merced County	\$292,625
San Joaquin County	\$292,625
Stanislaus County	\$292,625
Tulare County	\$692,625

Subsequent legislation changed the name of the program to the Central Valley Rural Crime Prevention Program.

Legislative History

AB 2768 (Poochigian, Chapter 327, Statutes of 1996) – Authorizes the County of Tulare to develop a Rural Crime Prevention Demonstration Project to be administered by the county district attorney's office pursuant to a joint powers agreement with the county sheriff's office for a 3-year period. The parties to the agreement are required to establish a rural crime task force that is required to develop crime control techniques, encourage timely reporting of crimes, and evaluate the results of these activities.

AB 157 (Reyes, Chapter 564, Statutes of 1999) - Authorizes the Counties of Tulare, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus to develop the Rural Crime Prevention Program, modeled on the above-described Rural Crime Prevention Demonstration Project, as specified. The bill would provide that it is the intent of the Legislature that the \$3,541,000 appropriated in the Budget Act of 1999 for the purposes of this program be allocated among the counties, as specified. The bill would further provide that the Legislative Analyst shall, by December 31, 2000, prepare and submit to the Legislature a detailed cost-benefit analysis of the entire program, and that \$100,000 shall be appropriated for this purpose. The bill would further provide that the title shall become inoperative on June 30, 2000, and that provisions authorizing the program shall be repealed as of January 1, 2001.

AB 374 (Matthews, Chapter 374, Statutes of 2002) – Extends the operation of the program to July 1, 2005, and provides for statutory repeal, instead, on January 1, 2006, and renames the program "Central Valley Rural Crime Prevention Program." This bill would require the Central Valley Rural Crime Task Force to develop a uniform procedure for all participating counties to collect, and would require each county to collect, data on agricultural crimes by June 30, 2003. The bill would also require the task force to establish a central database for the collection and maintenance of data on agricultural crimes and designate one participating county to maintain the database by June 30, 2003. This bill would provide that funds appropriated for rural crime prevention programs, as specified, shall be allocated based on counties' compliance with specified requirements.

Current Challenge

Currently, the Central Valley Rural Crime Prevention Program suffers two challenges: 1) A program sunset on July 1, 2005, and 2) A budget proposal for a \$1.9 million reduction in funding.

SB 453 (Poochigian), in addition to making several technical changes, would restore full funding (\$3.541 million annually) and eliminate the statutory sunset of the program.

Additional Background

Attached are additional background materials provided by the Tulare County District Attorney's Office. Tulare County has been designated the lead county for the purposes of this program and is responsible for data collection and overall program coordination.

Included in the following pages is also a description of the Agricultural Crime, Technology, Information, and Operations Network (ACTION Project). This is a federal program which utilizes federal funds and, although not funded by the state, is an integral component of the Central Valley Rural Crime Prevention Program.